



## What Is Community Justice?

Community justice is known by different names, including restorative justice, balanced and restorative justice (BARJ), and restorative community justice. It is an alternative way to look at the criminal justice system. Crime is viewed as an offense against the community, which includes the victim and the offender, rather than against the state. Community justice focuses on repairing the harm to victims, communities, and offenders that occurs when a crime is committed.

When approaching crime using community justice principles:

- **Victims have an active role in the justice system.** They are empowered to ensure that their own needs are met and resolve the feelings toward the crime that was committed. As a result, victims receive adequate reparation and can walk away from the experience feeling satisfied that justice has been served.
- **Communities can enjoy a lower crime rate and safer neighborhoods.** They can address their justice issues on a local level and find solutions that work for their unique circumstances. This involves a commitment to crime prevention programs and rehabilitation for the offender.
- **Offenders are required to accept responsibility for their crimes and must take an active role in repairing the damage their crime has created.** In the process, they are exposed to crime prevention programs and come away from the system with a better understanding of the consequences of their actions and the skills to make better decisions in the future.

## California Community Justice Project

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## Building Restorative Justice Principles in the Community

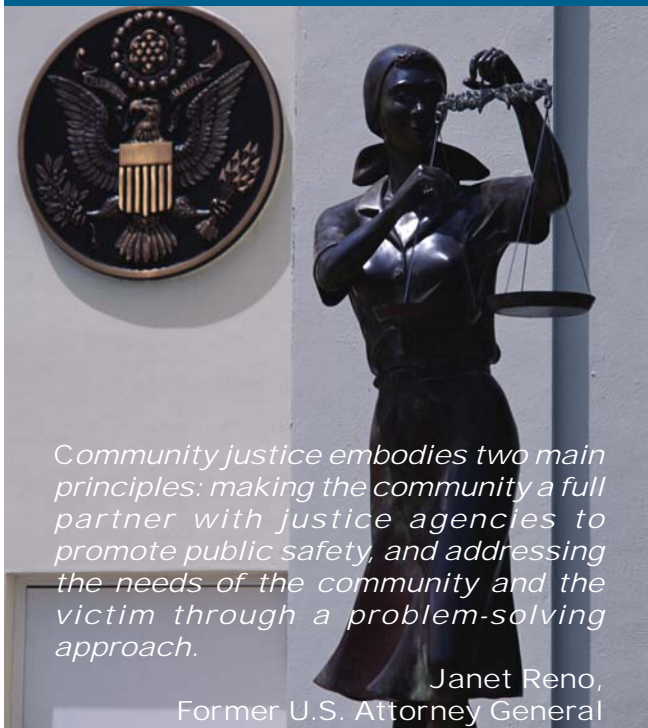


ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
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& THE COURTS

# California Community Justice Project:

## Building Restorative Justice Principles in the Community



*Community justice embodies two main principles: making the community a full partner with justice agencies to promote public safety, and addressing the needs of the community and the victim through a problem-solving approach.*

Janet Reno,  
Former U.S. Attorney General

The California Community Justice Project is administered by the Judicial Council of California, Administrative Office of the Courts, Center for Families, Children & the Courts and funded by a Federal Juvenile Accountability Block Grant (JABG) administered by the California Board of Corrections.

### Mission

The mission of the California Community Justice Project is to:

- Enhance awareness and understanding of community justice principles and practices
- Facilitate information sharing between existing community justice programs and start-up programs
- Facilitate the development of local practices consistent with community justice principles

The California Community Justice Project is staffed by a statewide coordinator who serves as a clearing-house for information on community justice and also works with a committee of restorative justice

experts to assist local jurisdictions in implementing a restorative approach to the justice system. These experts represent the courts, district attorneys, public defenders, probation, corrections, and community groups.

### How We Can Help You

- We provide information on community justice. Visit our Web site at [www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/ccjp](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/ccjp) for general community justice information; CCJP publications; links to other programs, research, and publications; community justice event announcements; and more.
- We provide technical assistance. We help courts, counties, and communities in California interested in building community justice programs.

Please contact Allison Schurman by e-mail at [allison.schurman@jud.ca.gov](mailto:allison.schurman@jud.ca.gov) or by phone at 415-865-7701 for more information. We would love to hear from you!

## Community Justice Program Examples

### Restorative Justice Boards

Trained community volunteers hear and dispose of cases. They work with the offender to design a contract that will determine probation conditions and restitution and address the offender's competency development. In ideal circumstances, the victim is involved in this process.

### Victim-Offender Mediation

Trained community mediators conduct mediation that includes family members and supporters of both the victim and the offender. During a mediation session, both parties are able to discuss the incident and its emotional impact, to ask questions, and to negotiate an appropriate disposition that each considers fair.

### Community Policing/Probation/Prosecution

Police, probation officers, or prosecutors are assigned to specific communities, where they work to resolve local crime problems at their source. Justice professionals receive a greater understanding of local crime issues and can then address these issues more effectively. Community members become more connected to the justice system and have a new ability to bring change and actively participate in local justice decisions.